



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

RELIGION IN SOME CONTEMPORARY POETS

WARREN S. ARCHIBALD

PITTSFIELD, MASS.

William Vaughn Moody, *The Masque of Judgment*, 1900; *Poems*, 1901; *The Fire Bringer*, 1904.

Frederic Lawrence Knowles, *On Life's Stairway*, 1901; *Love Triumphant*, 1904.

Josephine Preston Peabody (Mrs. Lionel Marks), *The Wayfarers*, 1898; *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, 1900; *Marlowe*, 1901; *The Singing Leaves*, 1903; *The Book of the Little Past*, 1908; *The Piper*, 1910; *The Singing Man*, 1911.

Stephen Phillips, *Christ in Hades and Other Poems*, 1896; *Poems*, 1898; *Paolo and Francesca*, 1900; *Herod*, 1901; *Ulysses*, 1902; *Sin of David*, 1904; *New Poems*, 1907; *Nero*, 1906; *New Inferno*, 1911.

Alfred Noyes, *The Flower of Old Japan*, 1903; *Poems*, 1904; *Golden Hynde and Other Poems*, 1908; *Drake*, 1909; *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, 1913.

Rudyard Kipling, *Collected Verse*, Doubleday, Page ed.; *Departmental Ditties and Ballads and Barrack Room Ballads*; *Poems scattered through prose*.

With eager expectations and with wistful yearning men have always turned to the poets as to watchmen of the night. The great poets see beyond the sunset and the stars, and read the writing of the wind upon the darkness. They are our prophets. God has whispered his secrets to them. And what they hear in the silence of the eternal, they proclaim in the streets of men. The poets are the pioneers of the spirit. They wander in desolate places; they are voices crying in the wilderness; and by the rivers of Babylon they see visions. The poets, at their best, have been leaders in religion.

So for these reasons many people ask today, Who are the new poets, and what message do they bring? And some especially will seek to know what aspects of religion constitute their message, what vision of the eternal shines in their large symbols and prophetic words. This is a reasonable inquiry, because English poetry from the

days of Chaucer and Langland to Tennyson and Browning has been distinctly religious. Indeed, it is impressive to observe that our greatest poets have arisen when the English people were mightily concerned with some great religious movement. Chaucer was the contemporary of Wyclif. Shakespeare was the poet of the large humanity which gave a glory to the Renaissance. Milton was the organ voice of Puritan England. Wordsworth was the messenger of that new love for man and nature which in the history of letters is called the Romantic movement. As Stopford Brooke observes: "The poets of England ever since Cowper have been more and more theological, till we reach such men as Tennyson and Browning, whose poetry is overcrowded with theology."

Since this has been so distinctly the high argument of our English poets, we may reasonably inquire how our younger contemporary poets are maintaining this tradition. This provokes two questions: What do we mean by religion? and Who are our younger contemporary poets? By religion, I do not mean precise statements on dogma or polity, creed or church. We do not look for epics on original sin, or lyrics on the historic episcopacy. The poets, when they are obedient to the heavenly vision, will go to the fountains of the religious life. And so we find that the great traditional themes of English poetry in this respect have been God, Man, and Nature; God's love for man, man's need for God, and the guidance of the inner Light; God's vision of man through Christ, and man's vision of God through Christ.

And who are some of our younger contemporary poets? If we wrote down the names of all the choir, we should have a very long list. In America we have, for example, Ridgely Torrance, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Percy Mackaye, Josephine Preston Peabody. In England, to name only a few, we have Alfred Noyes, Rudyard

Kipling, Stephen Phillips, and William Butler Yeats. To speak of all these, not to mention others, would be the task of an anthology rather than of the brief essay. I shall therefore select several who have been most conspicuous in the affection and admiration they have received from those of our youth who are readers and lovers of poetry. I shall speak of William Vaughn Moody, Frederic Lawrence Knowles, Josephine Preston Peabody, Rudyard Kipling, Stephen Phillips, and Alfred Noyes. I present these simply as being those of our younger contemporaries who have most influenced the young people I have known.

William Vaughn Moody has so recently left us and was so highly esteemed by those who read his poetry that in a true sense it can be said that he is one who lives. He had published before his death a volume of poems and two lyric dramas. When one attempts to summarize the religious aspects in the fine work of this poet, the word most suggestive is, I think, "prophetic." He is a prophet of the ideal. He is a poet who feels consecrated to a high calling—the proclamation in classic language of eternal ideals. This is clearly seen in what many readers will consider his finest poem, one which was hailed by Richard Watson Gilder as the grandest ode in America since Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*—the poem entitled *An Ode Written in a Time of Hesitation*. The text is St. Gaudens's famous bas-relief of Robert Gould Shaw and his men on Boston Common, and the subject of the poem is the national character during the Spanish War. He refuses to disbelieve in the ideal character of the Republic.

"The proud republic hath not stooped to cheat
And scramble in the market-place of war."

He has the irony of the prophet Isaiah in his arraignment of unworthy politicians.

“Our fluent men of place and consequence
Fumble and fill their mouths with hollow phrase,
Or for the end-all of deep arguments
Intone their dull commercial liturgies.”

This ode is a noble plea for the righteousness which exalteth a nation. It is not shrill or high-pitched or wild in thought, but firm in phrase, stern in demands for righteousness, and nobly eloquent. Like much of his work, it is Miltonic in style; and this is natural, for he was a student and editor of Milton. It is a prophetic utterance of our larger hope as a country.

All his poetry has this prophetic character. The *Daguerrotype* is a beautiful recognition of the spiritual character of motherhood. *Gloucester Moors* is a vision of the world's woe and the world's need; it is a prophetic psalm, and echoes the old cry, “How long, O Lord, how long!” In some of his poems, like the *Brute* and *Jetsam*, he is a prophet of the Apocalypse, dealing with strange, unearthly symbols and veiling his vision with obscure beauty.

This prophetic sense of the eternal moving through time and space is given a larger form in *The Fire Bringer*. It is the ancient story of Prometheus. And from this classic text he draws the great lesson of that sacrificial love which brings to “stone men” and “earth women” the fire of heaven and the light of day, the blessed rain and the natural darkness. In this play we find beautiful descriptions of the light shining in darkness, and the darkness comprehending the light. There is a terrible glory in the commanding miracle of the morning and the ancient magic of the night. Prometheus is the prophetic soul who feels the eternal spirit moving in his heart, and who can therefore never rest until the heavenly visitant becomes flesh and dwells among all men.

Much of this drama and of all his work is cloudy and obscure. He is also, perhaps, too academic for the great congregations. But at his best he is a poet who felt the presence of the eternal in the world of mortals, and who expressed this ultimate dream in a grand style, in phrasing which was classic and Scriptural in its origins and likeness.

Of another poet from whom many expected a good harvest in song and who now lives only in his verse, we may speak here. Frederic Lawrence Knowles left only two volumes of poetry. But these gave such large promise that he is worthy of honorable mention among our younger contemporaries of influence. In his poetry we see a fine religious feeling. He is the poet of what Emerson called "Love, which is the essence of God." There is nothing sentimental, weak, or shallow in his vision of love. The love of which he sings is both Lord and King, robed with the majesty of many suns and with the light of all the stars. He is the poet of that love which is the soul of Christianity. The title of his second and last volume, *Love Triumphant*, indicates the character of his work. And he is a preacher also in his methods, for he follows the homiletical tradition of a text. The texts of his poems in this last volume are Emerson's words, "Love which is the essence of God"; a couplet from Whittier,

"Love scarce is love that never knows
The sweetness of forgiving";

and the line from Shakespeare, "I do love my country's good." His creed is brief: "I know no sin except the lack of love."

Behind all outward shows and symbols in our Christian religion he sees the essential life of love. Churches, sects, creeds, and rituals, these are the visible and transient glories of our time. Over all is the love of God.

"Yet the east is red with dawn
 Like a cross where One hath bled!
 And upon that splendor drawn—
 Gentle eyes, and arms outspread—
 See that figure stretched above!
 As God lives! its name is Love."

He is a singer of a brave love, for he sings on Calvary's slope. He is the singer of magnanimous love, for he sings of that forgiving love which prays God to forgive those who know not what they do. He is the singer of the love that gives.

Theologically, it is most interesting to observe that he is a poet of the immanence of God. This aspect of the Divine nature pervades all his work. It shadows even the lines where the word does not appear. And again and again he sings with passionate joy of the indwelling spirit of God. He knows the presence of God in ancient days and in holy lands. He knows that presence also in these our city streets and country lanes.

"From Horeb's bush the Presence spoke
 To earlier faiths and simpler folk;
 But now each bush that sweeps our fence
 Flames with the awful Immanence.

.

But now to us each elm and pine
 Is vibrant with the Voice Divine;
 Not only from but in the bough
 Our larger creed beholds him now.

To the true faith, bark, sap, and stem
 Are wonderful as Bethlehem;
 Nor hill, nor brook, nor field, nor herd
 But mangers the Incarnate Word."

And so the Christ of whom he sings is the Christ of today. In our cities he sees the Master. In our homes he sees the Holy Child. In our lives he finds the roads

to Jerusalem and Golgotha. In the quivering hearts of men broods the divine spirit.

And his verse is crowned not only with such large themes as the Divine love and the immanence of God, but it is given here and there in devout tribute and beautiful phrase to very definite Christian themes. He writes of Easter, Christmas, and on such suggestive lines as "Out of the depths," "Above every name," "And he healed them." There is a touch of the religious poets of the seventeenth century in these short lines:

"It takes two for a kiss,
Only one for a sigh;
Twain by twain we marry,
One by one we die.
Joy has its partnerships,
Grief weeps alone;
Cana had many guests,
Gethsemane had none."

And many, having heard, will find it difficult to forget these lines on Golgotha.

"Our crosses are hewn from different trees
But we all must have our Calvaries;
We may climb the height from a different side,
But we all go up to be crucified.
As we scale the steep, another may share
The dreadful load that our shoulders bear;
But the costliest sorrow is all our own,
For on the summit we bleed alone."

This poet is indeed a poet of the Christian year and Christian thought.

So with delight we find this poet of the Divine love, the immanence of God, and Christian thought, bringing this clear and fine vision of the eternal into the service of his country. He has a noble exaltation in his prayer:

“O goddess, arctic-crowned and tropic-shod,
 And belted with great waters, hear our cry—
 More honest never reached the ear of God—
 We'll serve thee, laud thee, love thee till we die.”

In his *Patriot's Hymn* he sees both the glory and the peril of our land. And he speaks without any clap-trap of the rugged and huge democracy in the United States.

“Oft-times, Democracy, thou seem'st to me
 Not what the poets paint—a virgin fair
 With soft limbs, and pale cheeks of purity
 Framed in the splendid noonday of her hair;

Nay, but some Western Titan, bare of breast,
 Huge-legged, low-browed, and bearded as of old,
 A man of mountain muscle, and a chest
 Whose lungs indifferent drink the heat, the cold.”

His longest and most pondered work is the ode on New England, a filial tribute to her godly men and women, her throbbing cities and her quiet farms, her austere moods of winter, and her glorious days in June.

All his work is expressed with clearness and simplicity. In spirit and in words he is thoroughly of New England. His verse has the simplicity and beauty of the white meeting-house. A wholesome, good, effectual purpose is the prevailing character of his work. His lines are sinewy in strength and athletic in movement. Through his poetry comes the light of God, uncolored and untouched, just as the sunlight comes through the plain window glass of the New England meeting-house. He is a poet of the Divine love, the Divine Spirit, of his dear and blessed country; a poet of Christian faith and courage, knowing no failure except the failure to dare, knowing no sin except the lack of love, who out of the depths can lift his prayer to God, and on the heights can pray for those who fail.

With Josephine Preston Peabody we come to one who has gained high recognition on both sides of the Atlantic, and whose name, no doubt, would appear in every serious estimate of American literature. She has had for a dozen years a wide circle of friends who have known her as a lyric poet of a refined art, and as a dramatic poet of unusual promise. This promise was exceptionally fulfilled in her poetic drama, *The Piper*, which won the Stratford prize in England and immediately brought her name before a larger public.

Perhaps it is just to say that the religious aspect most conspicuous in her poetry is that second great commandment, the love of man for man. She sings of little children, of tender mothers, of very noble fathers, of lovers singing in the candlelight. She is one who has compassion on the multitude, on all who without a shepherd look up and are not fed.

Scattered all through her books, in many lyric poems, in her play, *The Piper*, in the *Book of the Little Past*, we find endearing visions of childhood. And this suggests that one of the finest contributions of the Victorian period and of our time to the more abundant life of our literature has been the artistic expression and spiritual discernment of the child. It has been, in one sense, the century of little children, and it is named in literature with the name of a great mother. It has been the age of children's schools and hospitals and playgrounds. The children have had their painters and their poets. Stevenson, for example, has been one of their poet-laureates. And Josephine Preston Peabody has written with the same grace and winsome humor and blithe and bonny spirit. Beyond all other mortals, the children are such stuff as dreams are made of, and to their airy imaginations this poet has given a local habitation and a name. The poem called *The Busy Child* will illustrate this quality in her work.

"I have so many things to do,
I don't know when I shall get through.

To-day I had to watch the rain
Come sliding down the window-pane.

And I was humming all the time,
Around my head, a kind of rhyme;

And blowing softly on the glass
To see the dimness come and pass.

I made a picture, with my breath
Rubbed out to show the underneath.

I built a city on the floor;
And then I went and was a War.

And I escaped from square to square
That's greenest on the carpet there.

Until at last I came to Us.
But it was very dangerous;

Because if I had stepped outside,
I made believe I should have died!

And now I have the boat to mend,
And all our supper to pretend.

I am so busy, every day,
I haven't any time to play."

This love for children and this knowledge of the little past are given a larger expression in her well-known play, *The Piper*. Back of all the life in this drama is the figure of Christ, to whom she has given the child's name of the "Lonely Man." Hamelin is the city of greed where the people whine:

"Five mouths around the table;
And a poor harvest, and now comes one more!
God chastens us."

Hamelin is the city of selfishness, and regards the child simply as

“Some one to work for me when I am old,
 Some one to follow me into my grave,
 Some one—for me.”

And Hamelin is punished for its greed, selfishness, and injustice by the loss of the children. The Piper and Veronika are the lovers of the children. The Piper cries:

“I love thy child. Trust me, I love them all.
 They are the brightest miracle I know.
 Wherever I go, I search the eyes of men
 To find such clearness, and it is not there.
 Lies, greed, cruelty, and the dreadful dark!
 And all that makes Him sad these thousand years,
 And keeps His forehead bleeding.”

The Lonely Man subdues the passionate resentment of the Piper, and the children are restored. The last word in the play is significant: “the Lonely Man.” And so a preacher might say that this exquisite and noble poem is written on the ancient word, “Suffer the little children to come unto me”; for when the spirit that was in Jesus is in the hearts of men, they do indeed suffer the little children to enter their homes, and they in their turn enter into an understanding of little children.

Not only of the children but also of men and women who bear the burden and heat of the day is she the radiant singer. Her drama *Marlowe*, fashioned in the likeness of an Elizabethan play and filled with the men who bore a large part in those spacious days, belongs to the poetry of humanity. The religious issue is the tragedy of Marlowe. Condemned as an atheist by the orthodoxy of his time, he seeks God in his own way. He gropes through darkness for the Light. He is the bold thinker, the adventurous poet, who has searched and never found his God in power, in fame, and in high places. At last he learns that peace is the great boon and this

is given not as the world giveth. His last words and the last lines in the play are:

MARLOWE: "O God! God! God!"

HOST: "Did ye hear the oath?"

GABRIEL: "I heard the cry."

There in poignant phrase you have the summary; those who did not know the man heard only an oath, and those who knew him best heard a cry for God.

This compassionate understanding of her fellow men is the subject of her last book, *The Singing Man*. The majority of the poems in this book refer to present social conditions. Her poet's heart has understanding of the wrongs of men and knowledge of the old woe of the world. She herself says in a foreword in her last book:

"We make our songs as we must from fragments of the joy and sorrow of living. What life itself must be we cannot know till all men share the chance to know. Until the day of some more equal portion, there is no human brightness unhaunted by this black shadow—the thought of those unnumbered who pay all the heavier cost of living without knowledge that there is any joy of living. No song could face such blackness but for the will to share and for hope of the day of sharing. Upon that hope and that mindfulness the poems in this book are linked together."

And attention should be called to the fact that the mortal of whom she writes is the *singing* man. He is the man who ought to be able to pass through even the darkness of life with a new song on his lips.

On the whole, her lyric poetry is kindred to the best in our English literature, and her dramatic poetry traces much of its inspiration and artistic quality to the lofty lines and passionate intent of the Elizabethan plays. Her religion is concerned mainly with the love of man for man. It is a religion of faith, hope, and charity. She knows the darkness, but she always sees the gleam. The city smoke becomes glorious in the sunset, and "one grey

dove" by magic of the light becomes a "flock of golden and silver wings."

When we attempt to summarize the religious aspects of these three American poets, we find them grouped into three great expressions of the religious spirit. The religion in the poetry of William Vaughn Moody is that of the prophets. He is concerned with the eternal. He writes of judgment and creation. He speaks as one who has come from Sinai or the New Jerusalem. Like Milton, whom he knew so well and to whose ample and resounding lines he looked as to a master, he sings of vast designs, great arguments, eternal Providence. And to him was given genius to conceive the amplitude of figure and solemnity of music, harmonious with his adventurous thought. In Frederic Lawrence Knowles we find the religion of Saint John and Saint Francis. He sees the immanence of God. The word is life, and has come to dwell with him, and he has seen the glory and left it shining in his verse. He is the poet of divine love, and with Franciscan piety he calls Pain his brother and Sorrow his sister, and holds there is no sin except the lack of love. In Josephine Preston Peabody we feel the atmosphere of the gospel stories. In her poetry we find the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, the angels singing in the night, the little children, the poor, the sick, the broken-hearted, and those who sing no more. And over all the darkness is the light, and in the midst of men is one who is able to put a new song into their hearts.

II.

In England there is one poet who has had, it is probably safe to say, more influence over our youth than any other contemporary poet. Rudyard Kipling has had an extraordinary career. During the last few years he has suffered an eclipse in fame, and he certainly has

not continued the fine quality of his best creative work. He has also suffered from an extreme attack of popularity. It seems only yesterday that Charles Eliot Norton was introducing him to America with high and generous praise, and everybody was reading Rudyard Kipling. And now it is rather the fashion to speak of his "brass-band tunes." But when the balance is struck between undue exaltation and unfair depreciation, a goodly account will be left to the credit of English literature.

His work is so well known and its characteristics have been so frequently and effectively remarked that it will be unnecessary to dwell at length upon the religious aspects of his poetry. It is fair to say that the religion in the poetry of Mr. Kipling is the religion of the Old Testament. In this fact will be found the source of his weakness and of his strength. For the religion of the Old Testament, although vigorous, virile, reverent of the law, is for the larger part tribal and racial. The glory in the religion of the Old Testament is concreteness, force, personality, obedience to the covenant; and these are the glories in the religion of Mr. Kipling.

Perhaps the deepest note was struck in the famous *Recessional Hymn*; for in these lines we hear the deep note reverberant in the Psalms. "Have mercy on Thy people, Lord." This is the same piety as in the 51st Psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness." Kindred to this thought of absolute dependence on God is the thought of communion with the Eternal. Man has many helps and companions in his approach to the Father. But at last and in the highest places he must walk alone. All alone he enters the deepest communion with the Eternal. All alone Abram communes beneath the stars with Jehovah. All alone Jacob wrestles with the angel. In solitude Elijah hears the voice. Christ kneels alone in Geth-

semane. The path between man and God is wide enough for one and only one. This thought of communion, one of the deep notes in religion, we find many times in Kipling's poetry. In a poem which appeared as early as 1888, and which begins, "Lo, I have wrought in common clay," we have simple and forcible expression of this feeling. His conception of God is the Lord of Hosts, Judge of the Nations, Jehovah of the Thunders, Lord God of Battles. It is the God of Moses, of Joshua, and of Gideon.

"Ere yet we loose the legions,
Ere yet we draw the blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid."

There is nothing of the Absolute and the Abstract in this religion. And it is curious that so little of the philosophy of India, with its vast, cloudy symbols of the ultimate, ever got into the religion of Mr. Kipling. His poetry remains impenetrably Anglo-Saxon and Hebraic. His religion is the faith of Beowulf and Gideon.

Very little of traditional philosophy or theology is found directly expressed in his verse. Perhaps the nearest approach to it is found in *McAndrew's Hymn*, where in the words of the old Scotch engineer he seems to show a fondness for Calvinism.

"From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy hand, O God;
Predestination in the stride o' yon connecting-rod."

When we turn from his ideas of God to his doctrine of man, we find ourselves again in the Old Testament. His men who sing the *Hymn before Action* are made from the same clay as Joshua and Gideon. Their psalms are battle-psalms, and in the lines we hear the clash of swords and the rush of warriors. Naturally, such a religion is emphatically masculine. Even his little

children speak like officers of the regiment; and even his gods in that prose-poem, *The Children of the Zodiac*, are distinctly human.

But the best in his doctrine of men is the capacity of his heroes to exercise the will to refrain. His noblest men are always doing the work for the work's sake, for the approval of God and not for the praise of men. They are willing to endure hardships, to be forgotten, or to see other men receive the reward for their work. All they desire is to do their best and receive "Well done!" from God. There are inspiring values in his young subalterns, bridge-builders, famine-officials, soldiers, and sailors, quietly and faithfully doing their work as in the presence of the "Great Overseer."

"By my own work before the night,
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought,
Thy hand compelled it, Master, Thine;
Where I have failed to meet Thy thought,
I know, through Thee, the blame is mine.

One stone the more swings to her place
In that dread Temple of Thy Worth.
It is enough that through Thy grace
I saw naught common on Thy earth."

Last of all, we may look at Mr. Kipling's idea of the future. His heaven is also vigorous and virile. You cannot enter that estate unless you have done something. His idea of hell is no less virile and vigorous. For you cannot enter that abode unless you have done something worthy of damnation. His poem, *Tomlinson*, is the story of a man who was not able to enter either of these strenuous places because he had not done anything, either good or bad. His finest description of his heaven is found in the Envoi to *The Seven Seas* and in *The Last Chantey*.

His religion then is the religion of the Old Testament. It is concrete, vivid, and personal. His God is the Judge, the King, the Lord of Battles. His men, at their best, are those who toil and fight as those who must give account to Jehovah. His heaven and hell are what Mathew Arnold called the German critics—vigorous and rigorous.

In the poetry of Stephen Phillips we enter quite a different atmosphere; for we move from ballads and battle-psalms into the drama and the lyric. This poet is a skilful story-teller. He takes the old familiar tale and rewrites it with new beauty and in lyric lines. He tells the old story of Ulysses or David with simplicity and often with unforgettable lines. As every preacher knows, the narrative is a powerful weapon; so much so that people are often in danger of remembering the illustration and not the thought. Through narratives then and as the expositor, this poet reaches his congregation. *Paolo and Francesca* is, I think, the best. This haunting tragedy from Dante is told with delicacy and skilful power. You feel the great temptation and you feel no less the great sin. He succeeds in making you realize the impelling love, the shadow of wrong, and the approaching woe. This is also evident and emphatic in *The Sin of David*. This is really a sermon in an English setting, founded on the Old Testament story, and having for its text, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." In *Ulysses* we have a beautiful and strong idealization of the love between husband and wife.

"Yet we are bound more close than by a charm;
By fireside plans and counsel in the dawn,
Like gardeners have we watched a growing child."

"Thou knowest the long years I have not quailed,
True to a vision, steadfast to a dream,
Indissolubly married to remembrance."

In all these dramas he does not point the moral, but leaves the lesson to the narrative itself.

Still another quality of religious value his verse possesses. This is the ability to make the unseen things appear as the imperishable realities of life. This ability does not rise to great power, and seems to spring more from the heart of the story than from the heart of the poet. But if he could increase this talent of expressing the life of the spirit, he would be a great poet. You feel very strongly in *Paolo and Francesca* a sense of Will behind our will, a Purpose overruling our desires. In all his plays you are haunted by the presence of the unseen fate and destiny.

In his poems as well as in his dramas he is at his best in narrative. He does not seem to have the vigor of effectual convictions. He is, after all, a teller of old tales, in lines of grace and beauty.

The disappointment which has attended the work of both these English poets—for one is too strenuous and the other is not strenuous enough—finds a compensation in the work of Alfred Noyes. He is a young man, just over thirty, and already he has become conspicuous in achievement and reward. He has even been hailed as “the young Tennyson.” When we read his verse from the point of view of religion, we find ourselves richly rewarded. For here is a poet who, while keeping all the vigor of the Old Testament, rises into the tenderness of the New. He is a Christian poet. He has written an epic on Protestantism. He is a herald of peace. He is a lover of little children. I am inclined to think that his poetry is more prophetic of the poetry of this century than the work of any other of our younger poets.

His most ambitious work is the epic poem, *Drake*. This had the unusual distinction of running for a year as a serial in one of the English magazines. The poem rings with the glory of Elizabethan days. All the magic

phrases are present in his lines: "pieces of eight—gentleman-adventurers—the Spanish main—poops—pavisades—escutcheons—Gloriana's Knight." It is distinctly an epic of Protestant England and her victorious struggle with Rome and Spain.

The glory of the Protestant movement is most conspicuous in the historical setting of the poem. For on the one hand you have Elizabeth, Drake, and England; and on the other hand Philip, Spain, and Rome. And the poem rings with battle. Drake is the Lion of England, Gloriana's Knight, the sword and shield of Protestantism, the Dragon of the Apocalypse, the dread antagonist of Rome. He laughs at priestcraft and great galleons and magic waters sloping to the west. His fearless and adventurous voyage brings the great debate to open combat on the seas.

"Day by day there came as on the wings
Of startled winds from o'er the Spanish Main
Strange echoes as of sacked and clamorous ports,
And battered gates of fabulous golden cities;
A murmur out of the sunsets of Peru,
A sea-bird's wail from Lima. While no less
The wrathful menace gathered up its might
All round our little isle; till now the King,
Philip of Spain, half-secretly decreed
The building of huge docks, from which to launch
A fleet invincible, that should sweep the seas
Of all the world, throttle with one broad grasp
All Protestant Rebellion, having established
His red foot in the Netherlands, then to hurl
His whole world-empire at this little isle,
England, our Mother, home, and hope, and love,
And bend her neck beneath his yoke. For now
No half-surrender sought he. At his back
Robed with the scarlet of a thousand martyrs,
Admonishing him stood Rome, and in her hand,
Grasping the cross of Christ by its great hilt,
She pointed it like a dagger at the throat
Of England."

This attack is confronted with a militant Protestantism, which prays to God before it goes to battle. And in the great sea-fight with the Armada they are strong because they are surrounded by the host of God.

“Ten thousand times ten thousand! What are these
That are arrayed in yellow robes and sweep
Between your prayers and God, like phantom seas
Prophesying over your masts? Could Rome not keep
The Keys?”

The battle, moreover, is considered as more than a duel between England and Spain. It is a struggle between Light and Darkness. And when the victory is won, the epic closes with a prayer:

“‘Not unto us,’
Cried Drake, ‘not unto us, but unto Him
Who made the sea, belongs our England now!
Pray God that heart and mind and soul we prove
Worthy among the nations of this hour
And this great victory, whose ocean-fame
Shall wash the world with thunder till that day
When there is no more sea, and the strong cliffs
Pass like a smoke, and the last peal of it
Sounds thro’ the trumpet.’”

It is also worth while to remark that we find in the poem the very spirit in religion for which the Protestant churches have bravely contended. They have insisted upon a free approach of man to God. They have nobly stood for the truth that in the highest communion man is alone with God. So we find Drake at a critical period in his voyage going out into solitary places to be alone with God. His prayer is the Christian prayer, “Show me Thy ways, O God, teach me Thy paths! I am in the dark. Lighten my darkness!” And his experience is that of the Christian:

“And there by some strange instinct, oh he felt
God’s answers there, as if he grasped a hand.”

And all the troubles and joys of his life lift him into that eternal life which is in and through and over all the temporal sway of circumstances. So in this English epic we have both the fact and spirit of that movement which made England both Protestant and modern.

One great religious value which is prominent just now in our public life is given a noble and frequent expression in his poems—the question of peace. These poems are not meek and mild. This poet is a trumpeter for peace, and his trumpet gives forth no uncertain sounds. *Lucifer's Feast* is a savage sarcasm on war. *In Time of War* is a realistic picture of the ghastly horrors of the battlefield. *To England in 1907* is a prayer that she might speak for peace. *The Dawn of Peace* is a ringing proclamation of the reality. He urges England to hasten the coming of that day when all the kingdoms shall be the kingdom of God, and we shall have one banner and “one emperor whose name is love.”

“Ah, God speed that grander morrow,
When the world's divinest sorrow
Shall show how love stands knocking at the
World's unopened door!”

Like our American poet, Josephine Preston Peabody, he is a lover of little children. One volume, *The Flower of Old Japan*, is a vision of the world as seen through the eyes of children. It is, as he says in his preface, more than a collection of fairy tales. It is “an attempt to follow the careless and happy feet of childhood back into the kingdom of those dreams which are the sole reality worth living and dying for, . . . for which mankind has endured so many triumphant martyrdoms that even amidst the rush and roar of modern materialism they cannot be quite forgotten.” His religion is one in which men are constrained to be as little children in order to enter the kingdom of God.

In this young English poet we find the expression of our Christianity which unites the vigor of the Old with the tenderness of the New Testament. It is a religion of courage, manliness, and freedom, of tenderness, peace, and love. It has reality, and that is something the poetry of Stephen Phillips has lacked. It has the apprehension of the Divine love, and the peace of Christ, and the heart of childhood; and these are qualities which have not been conspicuous in the poetry of Rudyard Kipling.

And now having spoken in detail of the religious qualities in the work of these English and American poets, it will be fitting to regard them in the light of a larger significance. What is their relation to the sovereign ideals of our time? Are they a part of the great spiritual movements which are sweeping through this period? They have this larger value. They are indissolubly a part of the idealism which will give this period its distinction. For students of serious thought are well aware that in this the first part of the twentieth century we are under the influence of two great spiritual movements.

The first is the social or humanitarian movement. In these poets, in our most prophetic leaders, we have a passionate expression of this new vision in humanity. We have with us a chivalric defence of the weak against the strong. We feel keenly the burden of poverty. We hate with perfect hatred the dominion of vice and the government of sin. It is this ideal which already has commanded the century to write reform bills, to abolish a most ancient slavery, to break the old wrongs with a rod of iron and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Man's vast concern for man, the love of his neighbor, the commandment of brotherhood, the care for children, the beauty of the home, the fraternity of nations—this social ideal is unquestionably a great force to-day.

Unquestionably also it has received an undue emphasis. The social problem has frequently and arrogantly excluded all others, and modern humanitarianism has often descended into futile sentimentality. It is the distinction of these poets whom we have considered to have given a noble utterance to this idealism, without the extravagance and decadence too often foremost in some other moderns. For this great ideal is in serious danger of paganism. Many of its advocates urge on us the conviction that this world is man's abiding home; and to persuade man that this earth is his home is supremely the effort of paganism. Christianity is exactly the opposite—God's supreme effort to make men realize that this earth is not their home. Here we are pilgrims and sojourners as all our fathers were. This world, says Christianity, is a way to the eternal. Jesus called himself the Way; his religion was called the Way; his disciples were those who walked this Way. One of the earliest church manuals, the *Didache*, was a guide-book for this Way. Make this Way glorious, make the crooked straight and the rough places plain, but never forget it is a road leading to a city which hath foundations. This is the classic experience of humanity. This is the Christian ideal. This is the restraint so necessary in the expression of the modern social ideal. This is the fine tradition which gives these poets a large significance.

The second ideal is the anti-intellectual—romanticism. In its negative aspect it is a protest against the scholasticism of science, a rebellion against the dogmatism of the intellectuals. In its positive aspect it places the emphasis on the world of feeling, on the priority of the inward life, on the authority of the inward light. For example, those who follow this ideal welcome the assistance of Bergson in breaking down the dogmatism of science and in placing the emphasis on the "vital im-

pulse." They welcome the assistance of Eucken in his attacks on materialism and his defence of spiritual reality.

This movement at its best has the spirit of Platonism and of Christian mysticism. Its theology is kindred to that of Schleiermacher, the great leader in the romanticism of the last century, in its valuation of feeling.

And this ideal, like the social movement, is receiving too frequently at present a wild emphasis. In poetry, for example, we have the undesirable extremes in the "barbarisms" of Masefield, in some of the "lollipops" of Yeats and Synge, and the unreasoning enthusiasm which in London has greeted the Bengali poet, Tagore. Even of Bergson it may be said, "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*." For the Christian ideal cannot agree with the teaching which places the emphasis altogether on the life of the many. We emphasize the life of the one. Neither does the Christian ideal agree with the teaching that the things to be studied are the things that flow. These indeed require serious attention. But the things we study above all are the things that cannot be shaken. So there is in this modern anti-intellectual movement much of the excess which in the poet has always attended romanticism.

With this extravagance, either in the social or the anti-intellectual movement, the poets we have considered are not concerned. They have chosen the better part. They have given the classic expression to these ideals. In Knowles we see the emphasis on the Divine immanence, the very heart of the anti-intellectual movement. In Moody we see the emphasis on the Divine sovereignty, which must ever serve as a supreme restraint to that movement. In Kipling we see a robust and virile appreciation of that world of man, his ships and machines, his soldiers and sailors, his land and sea, that actual world in which the social ideal lives and moves and has its being. In Josephine Preston Peabody we see that

sensitive knowledge of the injustice, the woe of the world, which is the prophetic cry of our humanitarianism. And yet she walks in reason where other moderns stray, for, however gross the darkness, the inhabitant thereof is the singing man. However deep the pit, man can be lifted up and a new song placed upon his lips. In her lines also we read a woman's skilled interpretation of the inward life, especially of the inward life of childhood. And the heart of the child is the entrance to the Kingdom. In Noyes also we find this emphasis on the inward life, expressed in beauty and melody and with a wholesome love for reality. And in his verse also we see what the social movement must learn and acknowledge as its true utterance—a reformation of man only through the help of God. The Armadas of unrighteousness are scattered not altogether by our puny vessels. At the last, they are driven by the winds of God on the ultimate Hebrides.

These are the characteristics of the religion predominant in our time and in these poets. It is a religion of men who labor, if need be, in solitary places and in far-off lands. It is a religion in which the child, the home, and the love which is the greatest of all have a large place. It is a religion in which God's peace is no religious romance, but an overwhelming reality in the parliaments of man. It is a religion of freedom and liberty, insistently assuring man that on the path to the eternal he has in the highest stages no guide but the Divine light. It is a religion which maintains a high ideal for man and for the spirit in man. It is a religion which holds both the Divine sovereignty and the Divine immanence; for the more we find the Divine spirit within us, the more assured we are that the same spirit guides the world.